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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
---------- 117775
O R 281150Z OCT 76
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2141
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8177

EXDIS

DEPT ALSO PASS TO A/SY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC
SUBJECT: VISIT TO CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED LEBANON

REF: (A) STATE 264445, (B) BEIRUT 8142

1. APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S CONCURRENCE IN CHARGE'S TRIP TO CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED LEBANON. WE INTEND TO MEET WITH DG OF INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES HISHAM SHA'AR NOV 1 OR 2 TO ASK HIM TO CARRY LETTER REQUESTING APPOINTMENT FOR CHARGE WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS MONDAY MORNING, NOV 8, AND TO DISCUSS SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS INVOLVED IN TRAVEL TO EAST BEIRUT. CHARGE EXPECTS TO DEPART JOUNIEH FOR CYPRUS BY HYDROFOIL NOV 10/11, DEPENDING ON SCHEDULE, OVERNIGHT IN UK, AND THEN PROCEED TO WASHINGTON.

2. IN CONNECTION WITH THIS PROPOSED VISIT, RSO HAS DEVELOPED TWO POSSIBLE OPTIONS TO COVER SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR DISCUSSION WITH SHA'AR.

A. OPTION 1: BEIRUT CROSSING. RSO PROPOSES TO USE COM CHRYSLER AND TWO FOLLOW CARS IN ADDITION TO PLO ESCORT. LEAD CAR WOULD BE PROVIDED BY DB
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SHA'AR. PLO ESCORT AND ONE EMBASSY FOLLOW CAR

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WOULD DROP OFF AT MUSEUM AND RETURN TO CHANCERY. COM VEHICLE AND ONE EMBASSY FOLLOW CAR WOULD CONTINUE ON TO EAST BEIRUT AND REMAIN WITH CHARGE DURING ENTIRE VISIT. AFTER CHARGE IS PUT ABOARD BOAT FOR CYPRUS, COM VEHICLE AND FOLLOW CAR WOULD RETURN TO WEST BEIRUT. RSO AND FOUR EMBASSY SECURITY PERSONNEL (TWO DRIVERS AND TWO BODYGUARDS) WILL ACCOMPANY CHARGE INTO EAST BEIRUT.

B. OPTION 2. ALEY/SHTAURA ROUTE. THE COM CHRYSLER AND TWO FOLLOW CARS WOULD, WITH PLO ESCORT, PROCEED TO ALEY WHERE PLO ESCORT WOULD TURN BACK, AND THE CHARGE WITH RSO AND SIX EMBASSY SECURITY PERSONNEL WOULD PROCEED TO SHTAURA. FROM SHTAURA CHARGE'S PARTY WOULD PROCEED TO EAST BEIRUT/JOUNIEH WITH ESCORT PROVIDED BY EAST BEIRUT AUTHORITIES. AFTER COMPLETING HIS APPOINTMENTS, THE CHARGE WOULD DEPART JOUNIEH BY BOAT TO CYPRUS, AND RSO AND ESCORT WOULD RETURN TO WEST BEIRUT VIA MUSEUM CHECKPOINT OR ALEY/ SHTAURA, DEPENDING ON SECURITY CONDITIONS AT THAT TIME.

3. THE POST HAS NOTED DEPARTMENT'S PREFERENCE FOR ALEY/SHTAURA ROUTE, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT WITH ADQUATE SECURITY AND CONCURRENCE OF ISF DG SHA'AR, THE MUSEUM CROSS-OVER OFFERS MORE ADVANTAGES THAN DISADVANTAGES. CONDITIONS PERMITTING, THIS ROUTE IS FASTEST, MOST DIRECT TO EAST BEIRUT, PROVIDING LESS EXPOSURE BOTH IN TERMS OF DISTANCE AND TIME. AS THE RSO INTENDS TO UTILIZE THE COM VEHICLE IN BOTH OPTIONS, MUSEUM CROSS-OVER IS BETTER SUITED FOR PHYSICAL PROTECTION AND SPEED EN ROUTE. BEIRUT CROSSING WOULD BE MADE EARLY MONDAY MORNING, NOV 8; IF ALEY ROUTE IS USED, CONVOY WILL TRAVEL SUNDAY, NOV 7, TO ASSURE THAT CHARGE IS IN EAST BEIRUT FOR MONDAY MORNING APPOINTMENT.

4. ACTUAL CHOICE OF OPTIONS AND SPECIFIC SECURITY PLANNING WILL DEPEND UPON OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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HISHAM SHA'AR AND SECURITY CONDITIONS AT TIME OF OUR PLANNED CROSS-OVER. WE PLAN TAKE RADIO EQUIPMENT TO PERMIT REGULAR CHECK-IN WITH EMBASSY. SHOULD PRESENT CEASE-FIRE HOLD, WE MAY STILL HAVE THE CHOICE OF OPTIONS. IF CEASE-FIRE COLLAPSES, WE MAY HAVE NO OPTIONS WHATSOEVER AS BOTH ROUTES MAY BE CLOSED TO ALL TRAFFIC.

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5. CHARGE AND RSO WELCOME DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS PRIOR MEETING SHA'AR. WE WILL ADVISE RESULTS OF OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH HIM AND TENTATIVE DECISION RE CROSSING ROUTE.
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